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Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate State

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Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate Afghan State

Summary

The U.S.-led effort to end Afghanistan's role as host to Osama bin Laden and other anti-western Islamic terrorists requires not only the defeat of the Taliban but also the reconstruction of a stable, effective, and ideologically moderate Afghan state. Otherwise, the country could continue to be a potential base for terrorism and a source of regional instability. An important beginning was made with the December 22, 2001, installation of a multi-ethnic interim Afghan administration under Hamid Karzai, following U.N.-sponsored negotiations in Bonn, Germany. An ethnic Pushtun with ties to the former royal family, Karzai has gained the nominal support of major regional warlords, but his leadership remains dangerously dependent on his status as a compromise figure, who can attract foreign assistance while not posing a threat to the warlords and other armed contenders for power. Moreover, the viability of the process set in motion in Bonn has yet to be established, especially the outcome of an Emergency *Loya Jirga* ("Grand Council") which is to appoint a Transitional Authority in June 2002, with the task of drafting a new constitution, and the holding of national elections by about December 2003.

The Bush Administration and the Congress have indicated strong support for humanitarian relief and reconstruction, but the precise nature of the U.S. role remains to be determined. As of late April 2002, the Bush Administration was focusing on the military campaign and rhetorically opposed to deep involvement in "nation building." U.S. forces reportedly have been deeply involved in checking conflict among competing local warlords, an informal peacekeeping role that puts American troops at risk of embroilment in local power struggles and also involved with Afghan forces that potentially are a threat to the Interim Administration.

Major obstacles to establishing a stable and ideologically moderate Afghan state include: the competing power aspirations of Afghanistan's several tribal and ethnic groups; a power shift towards the Tajiks and other minority groups and away from the once-dominant Pushtuns; the steady, long-term decline of Afghan state institutions that began with the Communist/Soviet occupation decade of 1979-89, and accelerated under the Taliban; the recent rapid increase in opium production and local power struggles for control over the lucrative drug trade; and, last but not least, the resiliency of politicized Islam, as promoted both by the Taliban and other radical Islamist parties who have been defeated militarily but retain influence in some areas.

A stable Afghanistan is unlikely to be constructed without significant near-term aid to reestablish security and relieve immediate economic distress, and extensive and long-term reconstruction support from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, the United States, Japan, and the European countries. In particular, Afghanistan badly needs economic development of the kind that will absorb into the workforce millions of undereducated youth – the Afghan equivalent of a lost generation – whose only outlets to date have been religious fundamentalism and warfare. Stability will also require that neighboring countries play a constructive role, or – at a minimum – avoid interfering in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

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Afghanistan: Challenges and Options for Reconstructing a Stable and Moderate State

Focus and Scope of This Report

The U.S.-led effort to end permanently Afghanistan's role as a base for anti-western Islamic terrorists requires not only the defeat of the Taliban—which has been achieved through American, allied, and Afghan military action, but also the reconstruction of a stable, effective and ideologically moderate Afghan state. Otherwise, the country could again become a base for terrorism. Additionally, unless some means is found to organize a relatively stable, multi-ethnic society, the current sharp divisions between the Pushtuns in the South and the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras in the North, West, and central Hazarajat region, are likely to have wider repercussions for the stability of Pakistan and the Central Asian states.

Figure 1. Afghanistan



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Unlike 1989, when the U.S. Government closed its embassy in Kabul only ten days after the withdrawal of the last Soviet forces, the Bush Administration has concluded that the United States has a major stake in the creation of a stable Afghanistan, and that it cannot be left to the armed Afghan contenders for power alone to decide the country's future. The Administration has not yet given a detailed indication of what role it envisions for the United States in the political, economic, and social reconstruction of Afghanistan beyond current plans for emergency food and agricultural assistance, assistance in the formation of a new national army, and anti-narcotics aid. However, both the President and the Congress have declared that the United States will play a major role, in conjunction with NATO allies and Japan, the United Nations, and international financial institutions, to promote economic development and encourage political stability in Afghanistan.¹

The stakes for the United States include denying sanctuary and support for terrorists, maintaining positive influence with a nuclear-armed and politically unstable Pakistan, curtailing the massive flow of opium-based drugs from Afghanistan, and, possibly, facilitating the creation of an alternative to Iran and Russia as routes for the export of Central Asian oil and gas. For all of these reasons, the future U.S. role in Afghanistan and the adjacent region is likely to be an important focus of interaction between the Administration and Congress in considering foreign assistance and defense budget priorities and policy issues during the Spring of 2002.

In terms of action by Congress, H.R. 3994 (Hyde), the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002, which was marked up by the House International Relations Committee on March 20 and reported (amended) on April 25 (H.Rept. 107-420), addresses the overall direction and focus of U.S. policy towards humanitarian relief and refugee repatriation, economic reconstruction, the suppression of narcotics production, and support for a democratic and market-oriented Afghanistan. The bill would authorize about \$1.05 billion in appropriations for assistance to Afghanistan, subject to certain conditions, from FY2002 to FY2005.

This report provides information on and analysis of the current situation in Afghanistan, taking into consideration the country's essential characteristics and political developments since about the time of the overthrow of the last Afghan King, Zahir Shah, in 1973, and sketches out four possible scenarios for Afghanistan's future. The scenarios incorporate the profound effects of the collapse of the Afghan Republic, the 1979-1989 Soviet occupation, subsequent civil war, and the rise and fall of the Taliban. Finally, the report identifies and analyzes factors that will influence Afghanistan's political future, and discusses three policy areas in particular in which actions by the United States could be crucial to the achievement of the U.S. goal of a peaceful, stable, democratic, and terrorist-free Afghanistan. An appendix

¹ Among other sources, see comments of Senators and testimony by Administration witnesses at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing, *The Political Future of Afghanistan*, Dec. 6, 2001; and comments of Members and official and unofficial witnesses at a House International Relations Committee hearing, *America's Assistance to the Afghan People*, Nov. 1, 2001.

contains key documents relating to the December 2001 Bonn Agreement, which is the framework for current efforts to create a stable and democratic Afghanistan.

This report will be updated in response to major political developments, but it is not intended to track issues concerning Afghanistan on a regular basis. Broader and more frequently updated coverage of issues concerning Afghanistan and U.S. policy is contained in CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy Concerns*, by Kenneth Katzman; and CRS Electronic Briefing Book, *Terrorism*, page on “Afghanistan, the Taliban, and Bin Laden,” by Kenneth Katzman, [<http://www.congress.gov/brbk/html/ebter68.html>]. For information and analysis concerning U.S. and other international humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan, see CRS Report RL31355, *Afghanistan's Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress*, by Rhoda Margesson.

Current Framework for the Reconstruction of a Stable and Moderate Afghan State

Achieving the goal of a stable and moderate Afghanistan depends on the establishment of a political process that has at least the tacit support of the major contenders for power and the Afghan people. A beginning was made at an international conference near Bonn, Germany, during December 2001, when representatives of various parties and ethnic groups agreed to the creation of an Interim Administration, and a procedure, with timetables, for drafting a new constitution and establishing, within two years, an elected government. The Bonn agreement offers hope that the various Afghan factions and forces may finally bridge their differences, but a number of indicators suggest that the path will be difficult.

As in the case of a U.N.-backed effort in 1992, which failed, the composition of the delegation was more representative on paper than in reality. The 23 signatories to the agreement represented four anti-Taliban groups: **The Northern Alliance**, representing the ethnic Tajik and Uzbek forces then occupying Kabul and other northern cities; **The Rome Process**, representing largely Pushtun exile followers of former King Zahir Shah; the **Cyprus Group**, representing largely Shi'a Muslim groups supported by Iran; and the **Peshwar Group**, consisting largely of Pushtun exile factions with headquarters in Peshawar, Pakistan. Of these four groups, only the Northern Alliance commanded significant military power. The composition of the Rome and Peshawar groups was heavily tilted towards Western-educated “technocrats” and other members of the former urbanized Pushtun elite.² Pushtun commanders and local *shura* (governing councils) in Southern Afghanistan, the home base of the Taliban, were not directly represented.

As agreed, the parties to the negotiations inaugurated a multi-ethnic interim Afghan administration on December 22, 2001, headed by Hamid Karzai, a prominent Pushtun tribal leader with a modern, democratic, outlook and a record of good relations with the Northern Alliance. The 28-member interim governing council also

² Bonn Talks: Who is Being Heard? *BBC News* (online), Nov. 28, 2001, 18:33 GMT.

includes two women, both medical doctors, who head the ministries of women's affairs and health, respectively. Indicative of the fragile nature of the bargaining to date, an agreed-upon roadmap for the achievement of a democratic political structure leaves most of the details for the future. (See Appendix I for the terms of the agreement, or [<http://www.uno.de/frieden/afghanistan/talks/agreement.htm>].)

As of Spring 2002, the Karzai-led Interim Administration continues to be described as beleaguered, dependent largely on Karzai's personal popularity with ordinary Afghans, especially urbanites, and the support of the United Nations, Western governments, and foreign aid agencies. Karzai's standing with his fellow ministers, the powerful regional warlords, and other influential rivals remains shaky.

Development of the Afghan State under the Durrani Pushtun Monarchy

The establishment of Afghanistan as a nation state dates essentially from 1747, when Ahmad Shah Durrani, a tribal Pushtun chief of the Sadozai line of the Abdali tribe, gained election by his tribe as the ruler (Amir) of territories approximating the present boundaries of Afghanistan. Under the Durrani ascendancy, Afghanistan experienced all the vicissitudes of dynastic chance and survived as a political entity largely as a buffer state whose northern and southern boundaries conformed to the high water line of the expanding British and Russian empires, and the periodically resurgent Iranian empire.

In the 20th century Afghanistan teetered between bursts of Western and Soviet-aided modernization and recurrent reaction spearheaded by the twin sources of rural power in the Pushtun heartland: secular leaders, including tribal chieftains, local notables, or commanders, and Muslim clerics of various kinds, including mullahs and influential *pirs* (spiritual leaders) of the mystical *Sufi* Islamic sects, which predominate in Afghanistan and Southern Asia. In many respects the traditional local power structure, outside of Kabul and a few other population centers, approximated that in the rural, pre-industrial West, with men of property or learning exercising governmental power and clergy providing spiritual guidance, moral authority, and often local political influence.

In general, modernization fared better in the north, among the Tajiks and Uzbeks, who practiced settled agriculture or carried on commerce, the Persianized Residents of Kabul of various ethnic roots, and urbanized, detribalized Pushtuns. The Pushtun tribes, many of whom are or were nomadic, have been more resistant to centralization and modernization, but nonetheless have long thought of themselves as the "real" Afghans.

Pushtun dominance has long been a source of resentment among Afghanistan's minority groups: the Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras. Both the Afghan Tajiks and those in Tajikistan have linguistic and cultural connections, but usually not religious affiliations with Iran. Dari, the main language of the Tajiks and most "Kabulis," is a variant of Farsi—a modern form of Persian. In matters of religion, the Tajiks, like the Pushtuns, follow the *Sunni* school of Islam, the larger of the two main Islamic

divisions. The Uzbeks have ethnic and linguistic connections to Uzbekistan and Central Asia, and are also *Sunni* Muslims. The Hazaras are a *Shi'a* Muslim minority with ethnic ties to Central Asia and religious ties to Iran.

Long-Standing Pattern of Violent Leadership Change

The still-incomplete conversion of Afghanistan from a largely tribal society to a nation state has been a process of slow advance and frequent periods of violent traditionalist reaction. Every Afghan king during the past century was either assassinated or deposed (Table 1). The first modernizing King, Habibullah Khan (1901-1919), was assassinated, possibly for being viewed as a tool of Britain.³ The most ambitious modernizer, Amanullah Khan (1919-1929), was deposed. His far-reaching economic and social modernization policies—especially the emancipation of women—engendered a violent reaction on the part of *mullahs*, tribal leaders, and tribes opposed to the Durrani confederation, especially those of the larger Gilzai confederation. Among other innovations inspired by travel to Europe, Turkey, and Iran, Aminullah created the Afghan Royal Air Force, outlawed polygamy, instituted compulsory education for both sexes, separated secular and religious authority, and created the first national assembly.

Durrani rule was broken briefly by a bandit Tajik interloper, Bacha-i Saffo (“Son of the Water Carrier”), who took power initially with support from dissident Gilzai tribes. His rule lasted only nine months, but Pushtuns still consider the brief rule by a Tajik as a humiliation—sentiments that have been resurrected by the dominance of the current Interim Administration by Tajiks.⁴

³ Going against popular opinion, Habibullah declined to use Britain’s preoccupation with fighting World War I to regain control of territories lost after the Second Afghan War (1878-1880), which now form the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan.

⁴ Harvey H. Smith, et al., *Area Handbook for Afghanistan*. Fourth Edition. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, 1973. p. 50-54.

**Table 1. Afghan Kings and Rulers Since 1901:
A Record of Violent Regime Change**

Royalist Period			
Ruler	Period in Power	Achievements	Circumstances of Loss of Power
Habibullah Khan (Durrani Pushtun)	1901-1919	Established a Council of State to manage tribal affairs; founded first college; founded first military academy; coopted mullahs with state support and constraints; promoted trade.	<i>Assassinated</i> , perhaps for being seen as too much under British influence.
Amanullah Khan (Durrani Pushtun)	1919-1929	Fought Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) ending British control over foreign policy. Ambitious modernizer: created first national parliament; outlawed polygamy, instituted education for both sexes; established secular civil law separate from Islamic law.	<i>Deposed and exiled</i> , due to revolt by Gilzais and opposition to modernization.
Bacha-i Saqqo (Tajik “Son of the Water Carrier”)	1929	Tajik interloper, took power with support of Gilzai Tribes, rivals of Durrani.	<i>Overthrown and killed.</i>
Mohammad Nadir Shah (Durrani Pushtun)	1929-1933	Widely regarded as a tyrant, but built transportation and communications infrastructure, suppressed uprisings, and revitalized the national army.	<i>Assassinated</i> by relatives of an executed opposition figure.
Mohammad Zahir Shah (Durrani Pushtun)	1933-1973	Promulgated 1964 Constitution, including reduced privileges for the royal family, an elected, but weak and party-less national legislature, partly freed the press, promoted education, including for females, released women from the veil, and obtained large-scale foreign aid from the U.S. and U.S.S.R., but his rule saw growing socioeconomic fissures and left the merging middle class unsatisfied.	<i>Deposed and exiled</i> by his cousin and former Prime Minister (1953-1963), Mohammad Daoud.

Republican/Revolutionary/Taliban Period			
Ruler	Period in Power	Achievements	Circumstances of Loss of Power
Mohammad Daoud (Durrani Pushtun)	1973-1978	Dictatorial first republican ruler who seized power with leftist Army support, promulgated one-party Constitution of 1977, promoted state-centered economic development and social reforms, repaired relations with Pakistan and Iran, but created bitter enemies among leftists, Islamists, and advocates of Pushtun irredentism (vis-à-vis Pakistan).	<i>Overthrown and killed</i> in coup d'état led by leftist Army officers.
Nur Mohammad Taraki (Gilzai Pushtun)	1978	Part of triumvirate of factionalized People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), issued decrees favoring women's rights and land reform that antagonized Islamists and rural leadership, generating revolt.	<i>Killed in shootout</i> with rival faction leader, Foreign Minister Hafizullah Amin.
Hafizullah Amin (Gilzai Pushtun)	1978-1979	Repressed rival "Parchimite" ("banner") faction of PDPA and angered Soviets by policies seen as too radically Marxist-Leninist.	<i>Overthrown and killed</i> by invading Soviet military forces.
Babrak Karmal (Dari-speaking Pushtun)	1980-1986	Embattled, beset by Kalqi opposition and rising <i>mujahidin</i> movement.	<i>Replaced</i> by Najibullah and exiled to U.S.S.R. Died in Moscow in 1996.
Najibullah (Gilzai Pushtun)	1986-1992	Promoted National Reconciliation program in 1986 and promulgated quasi-parliamentary constitution in 1987, strengthened army and tribal militia forces.	<i>Overthrown</i> by <i>mujahidin</i> in 1992 and brutally <i>killed</i> in 1996
Mujajidin Interregnum (Mainly Tajik)	1992-1996	Severe fighting between largely Tajik and Uzbek Northern Alliance and mainly non-Durrani Pushtuns ended by victory of Pushtun <i>Taliban</i> .	Tajik leaders Rabbani and Masud evicted from Kabul, <i>retreat to extreme Northeast</i> .

Ruler	Period in Power	Achievements	Circumstances of Loss of Power
Mullah Omar (Gilzai Pushtun but close aides mainly Durrani-Pushtuns)	1996-2002	Repressive regime based in Kandahar, with a strong streak of Pushtun ethnic nationalism., enforced puritanical version of Islam and relied on assistance from <i>Al Qaeda</i> and other foreign supporters.	<i>Fled</i> in face of U.S. bombing and attacks by anti-Taliban forces.

Growth of National Institutions Under Zahir Shah (1933-1973)

The modern Afghan state reached its apogee, in a manner of speaking, under King Zahir Shah, who ascended the throne in 1933 after the assassination of his father, King Mohammad Nadir Shah. Mindful of the fate of his predecessors who were perceived as having sacrificed the country's interests to obtain foreign support, or as having too aggressively challenged the power of the tribal chiefs and mullahs, Zahir Shah attempted a cautious modernization program while keeping a judicious distance (or so it seemed at the time) from both the United States and the Soviet Union, while accepting aid from both.

During the four decades of Zahir Shah's rule, Afghanistan experienced a growth of national political, economic, and social institutions, but the government still consisted of a thin and generally resource-absorbing military and bureaucratic layer imposed over the underlying tribal and ethnic structure.⁵ Nonetheless, the country developed many of the trappings of a modernizing nation state, including various foreign-supported economic infrastructure development schemes and a nascent system of public education from primary school through higher education, but with low levels of enrollment and few educational opportunities for females. This process accelerated with Zahir Shah's promulgation of a new constitution in 1964, which provided for the nominal separation of the King and royal family from direct participation in governmental functions, a party-less parliamentary system, universal suffrage, and a civil law code (with only secondary reliance on Hanafi Muslim jurisprudence) and nominally independent judiciary.

⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001.

Political Tensions Arising Out of Modernization⁶

As in the case of the former Shah of Iran, Zahir Shah's efforts to promote modernization inadvertently fostered the creation of new social and political forces which ultimately undermined his rule. Zahir Shah was and remains something of an enigma. He ascended the throne at age 19, and for thirty years largely left the government in the hands of relatives—first by uncles until about 1953, and later by his cousin, Prime Minister Mohammad Daoud. Perhaps too late, Zahir Shah finally took charge of the government in 1963, after Daoud's policy of hostility towards Pakistan (see below) led that country to close the common border, cutting off Afghanistan's southern trade links and devastating the economy. Despite his effort to reduce the role of the royal family and his promulgation of a new constitution with some limited democratic features, notably an elected, but party-less bicameral parliament, with limited powers to check and balance the executive authority, Zahir Shah's liberalization program was still-born. This outcome generally has been attributed to the King's lack of assertiveness and the fear of the country's social and economic elite of being displaced by popularly elected leaders.

Among other accomplishments, Zahir Shah and his new advisors and officials extended the reach of the central government by expanding the army and the national police system, enlarging the functions of the civilian bureaucracy, expanding the national educational system, and bringing a central government presence down to the local level. Although these developments helped to strengthen the state and weaken tribalism, their net effect was not wholly positive. The army and police were widely regarded as repressive, and the bureaucracy and local governmental apparatus were said to be corrupt, grasping, incompetent, and dominated, at the upper levels, by the King's relatives.

The latter years of Zahir Shah's reign brought significant economic modernization, but not enough to take Afghanistan out of the ranks of the least developed countries. On the positive side, the middle class in Kabul and other cities swelled from an estimate of fewer than a thousand at the end of World War II to almost 100,000 by the early 1970s. But public frustration grew over the fact that the government bureaucracy was not up to the task of managing and maintaining the economic and physical infrastructure provided by aid donors.⁷

Rise of Marxist and Radical Islamist Conflict. The political opening provided by the 1964 constitution boosted the aspirations of both a small leftist

⁶ The following account of developments during Zahir Shah's era are drawn largely from the Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, Area Handbook series. For the latest online version, see [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/aftoc.html>]. This is an incomplete update of the 1986 edition. Unlike previous editions, it gives little coverage of U.S.-Afghan relations during the Zahir Shah era.

⁷ Politically, it has been said that new educated and professional classes had failed to see that they had a stake in the reforms, having been "given too little responsibility to develop self-discipline and too little power to be totally committed." Nancy Peabody Newell and Richard S. Newell, *The Struggle for Afghanistan*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981. p. 44.

intelligentsia and radical Islamic counterparts. The Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was founded on January 1, 1965, with the explicit goal of contesting the elections held that year under the new constitution—elections that were officially party-less. The radical leftists tended to dominate parliamentary proceedings, while moderates remained cowed by political repression. Most of the major figures who later served in the Soviet-backed Marxist regime, notably Nur Mohamad Taraki, Hafizullah Amin, and Babrak Karmal, were active in the first elected parliament.⁸

The emergence of the radical left was paralleled by the growth of a radical Islamist movement, starting with the foundation of the Organization of Muslim Youth at Kabul University in the mid-1960s. The Islamists reacted not only to the rise of the left but also rebelled against the long tradition of co-option of Muslim clerics by the government.

Soon after emerging, both the Marxists and the Islamic right split along primarily ethnic lines. The PDPA was divided between a largely Pushtun *Kalq* (“masses”) movement under Taraki and Amin, and a more urban and moderate *Parcham* (“flag”) wing under Karmal. The split in the Islamist ranks was both ethnic and generational—between the followers of Professor Burnhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik religious scholar who founded the *Jamiat-i-Islami* (Islamic Society), and those attracted to “Engineer” Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a Pushtun Kabul University engineering student. Hekmatyar became the leader in an even more radical organization, the *Hezb-i-Islami* (Islamic Party). Both the leftists and the Islamists adopted similar authoritarian, Leninist-style, forms of party organization.⁹

Zahir Shah's Counterproductive Foreign Policy

Afghan foreign policy under Zahir Shah was characterized by two mutually reinforcing policy pillars that greatly influenced Afghanistan's subsequent political history. The first was the dogged pursuit of the cause of “Pushtunistan” (or “Paktunistan” in the dialect of Southeast Afghanistan and among Pakistani Pushtuns), a popular campaign for the return of ethnic Pushtun territories previously ceded to British India. These territories became part of Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province after Pakistan and India gained independence in 1947, but remained loosely tied to Afghanistan through trade, nomadic grazing, and family connections.¹⁰ The second foreign policy pillar was the effort to reap maximum gains from the East-West Cold War by playing one superpower off against the other.

Chronically Strained Relations with Pakistan. The Paktunistan campaign was pursued with particular intensity during the period 1953 to 1963, when the King's cousin, Mohammad Daoud, served as prime minister. The diplomatic

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁹ David B. Edwards, *Before the Taliban: Genealogies of the Afghan Jihad* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2002), p. 177-209, 235-244.

¹⁰ Because Afghan Pushtuns regard their country as the Pushtun homeland, there was no counterpart Pushtun separatist movement within Afghanistan.

agitation and frequent border incidents led to chronic strains in Pakistan-Afghan relations, including periodic closures by Pakistan of the common border, driving Afghanistan deeper into dependence on the Soviet Union for aid, trade, and military support. Ultimately, Daoud's policies so harmed the Afghan economy that the King sought and received his cousin's resignation. (As noted below, a decade later Daoud would overthrow the monarchy and make himself President of an Afghan republic.)¹¹

Rising Soviet and Declining U.S. Influence. The conjunction of Afghan irredentism and the U.S. Cold War alliance with Pakistan caused friction in U.S.-Afghan relations and led Kabul to drift into the Soviet orbit. U.S. arms assistance to Pakistan under the Mutual Security Program of 1954, which was aimed at checking Soviet expansion, had unintended consequences in the case of Afghanistan. Partly to placate Islamabad, the Eisenhower Administration and its successors rejected Kabul's requests for military aid, causing the U.S.S.R. to become Afghanistan's main supplier of arms and military training. Soviet weapons and the presence of Soviet advisors gave Moscow extensive influence within the Afghan army and air force. The Soviets also constructed important military airfields at Bagram, Mazar-i-Sharif, and Shindand, a gas pipeline to Soviet Central Asia, and a network of surfaced roads linking Afghanistan to the U.S.S.R. The northern road network and Bagram air base played key roles in the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.¹²

The United States actively contested for influence with the U.S.S.R., but was handicapped by geography and geopolitics. Vice-President Richard M. Nixon visited the country in 1953, at the outset of the Eisenhower Administration, and President Dwight D. Eisenhower visited Kabul in 1959. King Zahir Shah, likewise, visited Washington in 1963, about the time that he began taking a more active role in governing the country. The United States continued to provide economic assistance for projects such as the Helmand River irrigation project in southern Afghanistan, and the construction of an international airport at Kandahar that became a classic foreign aid "white elephant" project, but Moscow's influence became dominant.¹³

¹¹ Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Afghanistan: A Country Study*. Online version, published in 1977 [<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/aftoc.html>]. See Daoud as Prime Minister, 1953-63.

¹² Nancy Peabody Newell and Richard S. Newell, *The Struggle for Afghanistan*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1981. p. 40-43.

¹³ Beginning in 1956, U.S. AID began construction of an "international" airport at Kandahar for use by piston-engine planes transiting from the Indian Subcontinent to the Middle East. The airport was completed in 1963, just in time for the introduction of long-distance jets, causing the intended role of the Kandahar airport to fall to the international airport in Karachi, Pakistan. During the 1960s U.S. AID also constructed regional airports in Kunduz, Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, and Jalalabad. In addition, the U.S. Government encouraged the former U.S. flag carrier Pan American World Airways to take a 49% share in the Afghan government-owned Airiana Airlines, in support of which, the U.S. Export-Import Bank financed the purchase of two Boeing 727 passenger aircraft.

Mohammad Daoud and the Afghan Republic, 1973-1979

In 1973 Daoud emerged from the political wilderness to overthrow the monarchy and establish the Republic of Afghanistan, using younger, Soviet-trained army officers who were members of the Parcham (“Banner”) wing of the Marxist PDPA to carry out a relatively bloodless coup. King Zahir Shah, who was in Rome for medical treatment, remained there permanently. Daoud became president of a new Afghan Republic, which featured a presidential system and a single-party government. The new constitution was approved by a *Loya Jirga* (“Grand Council”), the traditional mechanism for giving assent to the ruler by representatives of tribes, ethnic groups, and other interests, in January 1977.

To the consternation of his supporters, Daoud as president reversed a number of policies from his days as prime minister. After using leftist allies to repress Islamic militants during the first two years of his rule, Daoud turned on them in the mid-1970s, purging leftists from the army and cracking down on the PDPA. He also began slowly to distance himself from the Soviet Union and cultivate relations with the Shah of Iran and the Saudi monarchy, and improve ties with Pakistan.

On the domestic front, Daoud did little to move Afghanistan towards modernity or democracy. Afghanistan remained one of the poorest countries in the world, with little in the way of industry or economic infrastructure. At the same time, his repression of both the Islamists and the leftists, his tactical withdrawal of support for Paktunistan, and disregard for parliament, created a host of enemies. The murder of a prominent Afghan communist in early 1978, allegedly by government agents, set in motion the April 27, 1978, coup against Daoud led by leftist army officers and the PDPA. Daoud and his family were shot to death after rebellious troops stormed the Presidential palace, bringing to an end more than 230 years of Durrani Pushtun rule.

Destruction of the Traditional Social Fabric: PDPA Rule and Soviet Occupation, 1978-89

Daoud’s overthrow and the Soviet invasion caused a diaspora of Afghanistan’s small educated and professional elite and the families associated with the rule of Zahir Shah, leading to the collapse of most vestiges of the old order. The Afghan communists attempted a number of social changes that under other circumstances would have been viewed as progressive, including measures to promote secular education and liberate women, but the PDPA leaders, who came mainly from urban areas, had little understanding of the countryside or respect for rural traditions. Their clumsy efforts to overturn the social and political order in the tribal areas provoked widespread rebellion. Equally important, a long-standing, bitter, and unresolvable split between the Kalq faction of the PDPA, led by President Nur Mohammad Taraki and Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin, and Parcham faction, led by Babrak Karmal, a Soviet protégé, brought the government to the point of collapse.

In addition to the basic Parcham-Kalq conflict, the Afghan revolution spawned a number of violent radical groups, both leftist and Islamist. In early 1979, under circumstances still described as “murky” by the State Department, U.S. Ambassador

Adolph “Spike” Dubs was kidnaped by a group of men whose identities remain a matter of speculation and dispute, but who were alleged to be Maoist opponents of the regime. Dubs was killed in a fusillade of fire when Afghan interior ministry forces, reportedly at the urging of Soviet advisors, stormed the building in which he was being held.¹⁴

The more nationalistic Chalcis gained the upper hand in the summer of 1978 and sent Babrak Karmal and a number of other prominent Parchamites, who tended to have pro-Soviet leanings, into exile as ambassadors to Soviet Bloc countries. By early 1979 the renewed split in the PDPA and the reckless policies of Prime Minister Amin, the most energetic of the governing duo, had sparked widespread rebellions. Taraki visited Moscow in September 1979, where he was elaborately feted, and returned probably with orders to get rid of Amin. In October 1979, however, Amin moved first, organizing the murder of Taraki and seizing power.

Amin’s ruthless power grab and the emergence of an anti-Marxist tribal revolt alarmed the Soviet Union, which feared that Amin would single-handedly destroy the revolution. In December 1979, Leonid Brezhnev gave the fateful order for the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan to keep PDPA government from collapsing. The spearhead forces of the Soviet invasion stormed the presidential palace and killed Amin, replacing him with Babrak Karmal, the Parcham leader who had been in exile in Moscow.¹⁵

Anti-Soviet War and the Rise of Islamic Extremism

U.S. policymakers and supporters of the Afghan resistance movement expected that the anti-Soviet campaign by the Afghan *mujahidin* would contribute to the forging of a new sense of Afghan nationhood, but the war actually had the opposite effect. Instead of coalescing around a common cause, the particular circumstances of the conflict intensified the existing ethnic, tribal, religious, and ideological divisions of the society, and related power rivalries among individual leaders.

Several aspects of the anti-Soviet war period were particularly divisive, and continue to impede national reconciliation today. One was the boost given to Islamic extremism, which developed in a context of ideological conflict with Western-educated secularists and personal power rivalries. At bottom, the rise of radical versions of Islam had roots in a reaction against modernization and rising Western influences associated with what some Islamists viewed as a corrupt and decadent monarchy, and against the Marxists.

Although the anti-Soviet mujahidin often were perceived as backward, albeit admirably dedicated tribesmen, most of the principal Islamist *political* leaders in the

¹⁴ Thomas T. Hammond, *Red Flag Over Afghanistan: The Communist Coup, the Soviet Invasion, and the Consequences*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984: 64-65.

¹⁵ By this point in time the Soviets already had 4,500 troops in country and controlled Bagram Airport. *Ibid.*, 80-101.

anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan were men of education and social position. More than half of the seven leaders of the so-called Peshawar Alliance that was headquartered in Peshawar, Pakistan, during the anti-Soviet conflict, were university educated.¹⁶ By and large, however, real power in the anti-Soviet resistance tended to flow to younger leaders with an Islamist orientation but a secular background, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Ahmad Shah Masud, who had organizational and military skills, and who could command, or at least support, *mujahidin* in the field.

Last, but not least among the sources of division, and increasingly important after the PDPA coup in 1978, was meddling by a number of foreign powers, most notably Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, each of which backed ethnic and ideological favorites, and private promoters of radical ideologies. Pakistan favored Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Saudi Arabia backed Professor Rasul Sayyaf, and Iran supported several small Shi'a Hazara groups. Osama bin Laden's role dates from late 1980s, when he and a number of other private Saudis attempted to promote their radical version of Sunni Islam among the Afghan *mujahidin*.

Collapse of the Afghan State, 1989-1996

The Soviet withdrawal set in motion a power struggle that in turn set the stage for the rise of the Taliban. The initial round involved rival *mujahidin* groups headquartered in Peshawar, who were members of the so-called Alliance and, until 1992, the remaining supporters of the communist government headed by Najibullah, including a reduced but still intact Afghan army. Despite several promising negotiations, neither the seven Alliance parties headquartered in Peshawar, nor the commanders in the countryside, who met separately in a meeting organized by the late Abdul Haq, one of the most prominent field commanders, were able to agree on a division of power.

Failure of a U.N. Brokered Power Transfer In 1992

The regional power rivalries and unbridled ambitions of the principal political leaders and field commanders did much to turn victory over the Soviets into a new period of misery for the country. The chain of events following the Soviet withdrawal may provide some lessons for the present, especially the effort during 1991 and 1992 of Benon Sevan, the representative of the U.N. Secretary General, to broker a peace settlement between the Najibullah regime in Kabul and the *mujahidin*. The final version of the plan, which had been accepted by most of the parties and commanders and their foreign backers, especially Pakistan and Iran, provided for a peace settlement on lines very similar to the Bonn Accord of December 2001:

¹⁶ Burnhanuddin Rabbani, leader of the *Jamiat-i-Islami*, the political organization of the largely Tajik Northern Alliance, earned a degree in Islamic theology at Cairo's prestigious Al Azhar University. Saudi Arabia's favorite, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, with close ties to the radical international Muslim Brotherhood, earned a Master's Degree from Al Azhar. Sebghatullah Mojaddidi, head of the traditionalist *Jabba-e-Nejat-e-Milli Afghanistan* (Afghan National Liberation Front), was a professor of theology and a Pir (sufi religious leader.) Summarized from a variety of sources.

- the early (within weeks) formation of “pre-transition council”
- a transitional authority to govern the country, leading to
- “free and fair elections” within about two years

Sevan reportedly came close to gaining full agreement among the Afghan parties and their international supporters on the outlines of a proposed settlement, only to have the effort effectively torpedoed by dissension among the *mujahidin* parties and the decision of Najibullah, on March 18, 1992, to retract his prior commitment to resign the presidency as part of a settlement.

The negotiating deadlock was broken militarily by the General Dostum, an Uzbek and former “hero” of the Marxist government, who abandoned the Kabul regime and joined forces with Masud, a Tajik. Militarily, Dostum’s move resolved a three-cornered power struggle between the Tajiks under Rabbani and Masud, the Uzbeks under Dostum, and non-mainstream Pushtuns, under Pakistan’s favorite, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in favor of the Tajiks. Dostum also blocked Najibullah’s attempted flight to the Soviet Union. Instead, Najibullah fled to the United Nations compound, where he received political asylum. (One of the first acts of the Taliban after taking Kabul in September 1996, was to drag Najibullah from the U.N. compound and brutally execute him.)

Three-Cornered Ethnic Power Conflict in the 1992-1996 Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

With Hekmatyar on the outside – literally and figuratively – the new Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, like the current Interim Administration, was largely a non-Pushtun affair. The original plan was that the presidency would rotate among the *mujahidin* leadership, but after the first president, Sibghatullah Mojadedi, a moderate Islamist with no significant military forces, gave way to Rabbani, the latter refused to give it up. The right to control Kabul became the object of a three-cornered free-for-all among the well-armed, ethnically-aligned factions. The Uzbek Dostum switched sides once more, aligning with the Pushtun Hekmatyar against the Tajiks led by Rabbani and Masud. During 1993 and 1994 Hekmatyar’s forces pounded much of Kabul to rubble with rockets, reducing the population from about 2 million at the end of the Soviet occupation period to less than 500,000. In May 1996 Rabbani and Masud made a deal with Hekmatyar, giving him the Presidency, but all of them were routed by the Taliban in September 1996. Hekmatyar fled ultimately to Iran, and Rabbani and Masud to their redoubt in the Panjsher Valley, where they were sustained by limited assistance from their old enemy, Russia. Rabbani, who in the interim had reclaimed the presidency, took the credentials of the internationally recognized Afghan Islamic Republic of Afghanistan with him.¹⁷

¹⁷ Afghanistan: Events of 1994. *Book of the Year, 1994*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1994. [<http://www.jawanan.com/afg1994.html>]

Rise and Fall of the Taliban

The story of the rise of the Taliban (plural of *Talib*, an Islamic student) has been well covered in the press and other media since the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the onset of the anti-terrorist war in Afghanistan. Several aspects of the Taliban's rise to power have continuing relevance as cautionaries to the United States and other international supporters of the Interim Administration under Mohammad Karzai:

- First, the Taliban were widely welcomed, especially in the Pushtun areas, for putting an end to endemic petty warfare and disorder, including especially the disruption of trade and commerce. This is still a goal of great importance to commercial interests and ordinary Afghans.
- Second, the Taliban recruited numerous tribal leaders who were motivated mainly by personal self-interest—the maintenance of their personal power. Many of these same leaders and their followers continue to be a major factor in the countryside.
- Third, the Taliban represented a Pushtun resurgence in the reaction to the rising power of the non-Pushtun minorities, and completed the near total polarization of the country on Pushtun/non-Pushtun lines. This conflict is by no means resolved and may come to a head in the formation of the *Loya Jirga*, scheduled to meet in June 2002.
- Finally, the preference of the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, to rule from his southern home base of Kandahar, symbolized starkly the cultural alienation of Pushtun conservatives from the Tajik-dominated Northern Alliance, which militarily controlled Kabul, Bagram, and adjacent areas during the period 1992-1996, and earned a reputation for oppression and misrule.

Prospects for Recreating a Stable and Moderate Afghan State

Achieving the goal of the United States, its allies, and the international community of a stable and moderate Afghan state will depend on many factors, both internal and external. Most of these factors cannot now be predicted with any certainty, but if past is prologue, it may be possible to achieve a rough understanding of the requirements for ending Afghanistan's steady disintegration and recreating a stable and moderate state. The following section evaluates the prospects of achieving this goal by considering the main contributing factors in past periods of comparative stability, the status of these factors at present, the comparative strength of various claimants to power, and four possible scenarios that might result from the actions of internal forces and external actors.

Past Elements of Stability and Current Status

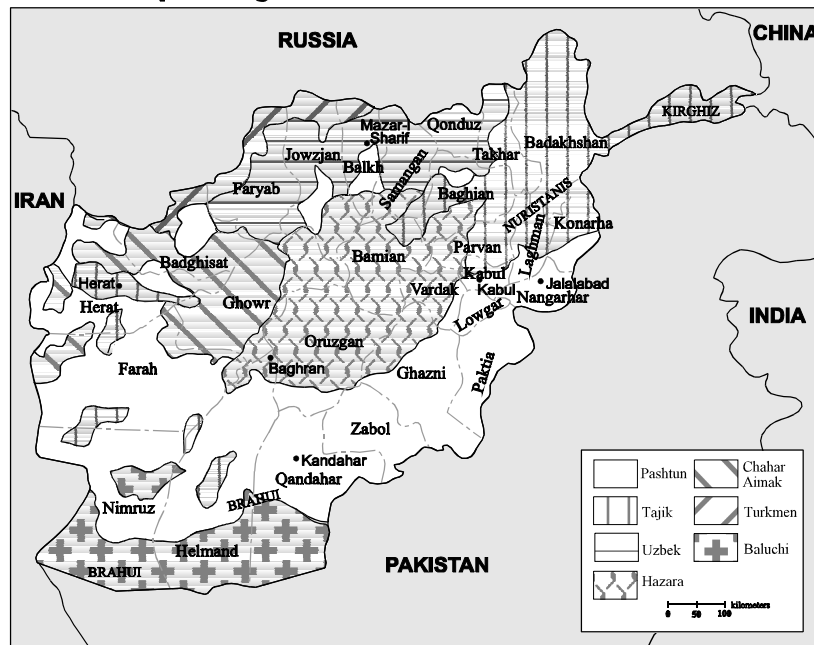
Although many Afghans now tend to look back to the rein of Zahir Shah with somewhat rose colored lenses, Afghanistan did in fact enjoy a kind of stability during most of the reign of Zahir Shah (1933-1973). Even if the conditions that facilitated past stability cannot be recreated, it is useful to understand what they were, if only as an indicator of their presence or absence in the current situation. Also, the factors that allowed stability under Zahir Shah proved temporary, and ultimately led to political instability and the overthrow of the monarchy. Moreover, after three decades of brutal civil war, Afghanistan today retains few of its characteristics under the Afghan monarchy or even under Daoud's Republic.

Sources of Legitimacy. In modern times the king and most senior officials have been members of the Durani Pushtun tribe. The 1964 constitution, which imposed some formal limits on royal authority, nonetheless provided that the succession "shall continue in the House of His Majesty Mohammad Nadir Shah."¹⁸ For most of his reign, Zahir Shah's legitimacy was perhaps accepted by most of the Pushtuns and others who counted politically, both in Kabul and in the countryside. By the end of his reign, however, the legitimacy of the King and his officials was increasingly contested by university students both on the left and the Islamic right, and by members of the growing middle and professional classes, who were frustrated at being denied a meaningful role in national affairs. Since the overthrow of Zahir Shah, each turn of the political wheel has reduced the legitimacy of the state.

Currently, the main sources of legitimacy of the Interim Administration with ordinary Afghans are Karzai's personal acceptability to disparate elements, his ability to attract international support, and the promise of a future democratic political order. Opponents of the current government, especially current or former Taliban, radical Islamists, and warlords, do not accept the government's legitimacy, though they may cooperate or avoid openly challenging it out of self-interest. Karzai's connection to the former royal family does not by itself convey legitimacy, but may appeal to some Afghans, especially Kabul residents and Pushtuns in southern Afghanistan, who remember better times past.

Acceptable Ethnic Balance. Ethnic and tribal conflict has long been the bane of Afghanistan. The main fault line has been between the Pushtuns, who form a plurality of something less than 40 percent of the population, and the minority Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazaras, and others. In the best of times the ethnic balance was preserved through a kind of informal social compact that provided for Pushtun control over the main levers of power but with considerable space for the Tajiks in particular to participate in the middle levels of the administration and the army, and to dominate the commercial life of Kabul and other cities.

¹⁸ The "House" refers to the Mohammadzai line within the Barakzai branch of the Durani confederation. Smith, et al., *Area Handbook for Afghanistan*, op. cit., p. 66-67, 194.

Figure 2. Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan**Ethnic Groups in Afghanistan**

The benefits of the arrangement generally did not extend to the Hazaras, who faced considerable discrimination and geographical isolation in their mountainous homeland around Bamiyan and elsewhere in the Central Hazarajat, or to the Uzbeks and other minorities. During the past two decades the Hazaras have become armed and mobilized, but still lack power to decide their own future. The Uzbeks, who occupy relatively prosperous lands around Mazar-i-Sharif, have gained in economic and military strength under the leadership of General Dostum.

Positive Center-Provincial Relations. The third element in past periods of stability has been comparative harmony between the state, whose officials staffed the central government ministries and the provincial administrations, and the tribal leaders, Muslim clerics, and other notables who constituted the local power centers outside the capital. This relationship was aided by the fact that relatively few demands were imposed by the central government, which carried out limited functions. Relations between the state and local forces had become progressively more difficult with the increase of modernization and economic development. The complete breakdown of any semblance of a functioning administration, starting with the Marxist coup in 1978, including the destruction of the central bureaucracy and the complete disappearance of the Kabul's involvement in provincial affairs, will make it very difficult to reestablish the structure of a functioning nation state.

Harmony Between the State and Islam. Last, but not least, stability depended heavily on the maintenance of a balance between the spheres of the state and Islam. For much of the country's history, the state managed provincial and tribal affairs through the aid of the mullahs and other clerics, who also enjoyed state patronage. By the 1970s, these relations had become strained owing to the rise of various ideologically Islamist movements and parties. The Taliban successfully

avoided this conundrum by creating a theocratic system that largely eliminated the apparatus of the state. Resistance from the Islamists and traditionalists could create a serious challenge to the objectives of the United States, the United Nations, and the international community, all of which support in one way or another a modernist development agenda, including emphasis on matters such as women's rights and universal secular education.

Critical Role of Foreign Powers. Interaction with foreign powers has been a critical dimension of Afghan history. In the distant past, Afghanistan was both a well-spring of empires and a corridor through which conquerors passed to the richer lands of what are now India and Pakistan. The Afghan Lodhi Dynasty ruled parts of what is now Pakistan and northern India from the mid-tenth century until being displaced by the Moghul Empire in the mid-16th century—a multicultural construction which included a large admixture of Afghans in the military ranks. In modern times Afghanistan has generally been the object of foreign conquest—especially by Persia, British India, and Russia. The Durrani Dynasty established and maintained its dominance by fighting off British and Russian incursions. The collapse of Durrani rule led to extreme foreign intervention in the form of invasion and occupation by the Soviet Union and support to the anti-Soviet resistance by a host of powers, including especially the United States, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. The Taliban came to power with critical Pakistani and Saudi Arabian support, while Russia and Iran sought to bolster the Alliance forces of Rabbani and Masud.

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the effort to get rid of the Taliban brought the United States, Russia, Uzbekistan and other former Soviet Central Asian republics into an uneasy common cause. The anti-Taliban campaign appeared initially to draw Iran into a more cooperative relationship with the United States, albeit only tacitly, but Tehran's objectives became less clear with the defeat of the Taliban and the growing presence of U.S. and other Western military forces in the country. Iran's reported reinvolvement in Afghan affairs, including alleged support to both Ismail Khan in Herat and the Uzbek leader, General Dostum, in Mazar-i-Sharif, have deeply troubled U.S. and allied officials.¹⁹ Pakistan appears largely to have lost its former ability to influence Afghanistan by manipulating the Pushtuns and supporting Islamic radicalism.

Negotiating the Multi-Layered Afghan Power Matrix

Resolving the ethnic problems and constructing a government with recognized legitimacy will be a daunting task that requires reconciling a wide array of competing interests and personalities. Rather than a two-dimensional schematic the Afghan political matrix has the appearance of a Rubik's Cube, with numerous layers of independent actors, many of whom have the potential to interact with each other in various combinations.

¹⁹ John F. Burns, Moscow Stakes Claim to Afghan Role with High-Level Visit. *New York Times*, Feb. 5, 2002: A13; Peter Baker, Warlord Gets Money, Arms from Iran, Afghan Aides Say. *Washington Post*, Feb. 7, 2002: A9.

Ethnicity. The country's ethnic divisions lie at heart of the problem of achieving national unity, and constitute the first layer. Even personal ambition, the most overt driving force of disunity, operates within an ethnic context. Since the Soviet withdrawal in 1989 ethnicity has been the main common denominator of civil strife. At present, Tajik-Pushtun rivalry is the core issue affecting Afghan politics, with the Pushtuns viewing the Interim Administration as Tajik-dominated.

Warlords and Commanders. The second layer consists of warlords and commanders, whose ranks include the **Panjsheri Tajik commanders** of the Northern Alliance, such as **General Mohammad Fahim**; the Uzbek leader **General Rashid Dostum**, who holds the nominal post of Deputy Defense Minister in the Interim Administration; **Ismail Khan**, a Tajik leader who controls five provinces in the area around Herat who often acts independently from the Northern Alliance, with whom he is affiliated; and numerous rival tribal leaders and warlords of the Pushtun belt, such as Kandahar Governor **Gul Agha Shirzai**, a Durrani Pushtun, and various commanders among the **Eastern Shura** ("governing council"), an influential body centered around Jalalabad, including the current regional governor, **Haji Abdul Qadir**, elder brother of Abdul Haq, who was killed by the Taliban last October in a vain attempt to generate a uprising by local Pushtun tribes; and, last but not least, remnants of the **Taliban**, some of whom undoubtedly will seek to regain influence under some guise.

Ideologically-Oriented Political Party Leaders. These leaders constitute a third layer. They range from a few modernist politicians affiliated with ex-King Zahir Shah, such as **Sayyid Ahmad Gailani**, an urbane hereditary leader (*pir*) of the moderate *sufi* Islamic sect, through "moderate Islamists" like Cairo-educated **Sabghatullah Mojadiddi**, and a range of Islamic radicals.

The more intensely anti-Western political aspirants include, most notably, **Burnhanuddin Rabbani** and his predominantly Tajik *Jamiat-i-Islami*, and **Gulbuddin Hekmatyar** (*Hezb-i-Islami*), once the favorite of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and reportedly the largest recipient of CIA arms and assistance during the anti-Soviet war. *The New York Times* reported on May 9, 2002, that the CIA targeted Hekmatyar in an attack on a convoy near Kabul in order to preempt anticipated attacks on U.S., coalition, and Afghan government forces and figures, including interim leader Karzai. Hekmatyar is said to have survived a strike on his convoy by a Hellfire missile fired from a Predator drone reconnaissance aircraft.

Rabbani, a native of Badakhshan Province in the extreme Northeast, is more of a traditionalist than a radical, but has shown strong hostility to Western influence and secularization. Ideologically, the closest Pushtun counterpart to Rabbani may be **Yunis Khalis**, who heads his own faction of the *Hezb-i-Islami* and was one of the few *mujahidin* political leaders to lead men in combat. A remarkably vigorous 87 year old who reportedly once exercised influence over Mullah Omar before breaking with the Taliban, Khalis may still command support among the Eastern Pushtun tribes in the region around Jalalabad.

Rabbani, still viewed as the political “Godfather” of the Northern Alliance, now finds his authority challenged by younger leaders of his party, **General Mohammad Fahim** and **Younis Qanooni** (who are also military commanders, as noted above) and **Dr. Abdullah Abdullah**. This “Panjsheri Tajik triumvirate” overrode his objections and assumed the key ministries of defense, interior, and foreign affairs. Rabbani may still may wield considerable influence with the rank and file of the party.

The most **pan-Islamic members** of the ideological layer (and hence most inclined towards cooperation with Islamic terrorists) include Saudi-backed **Abdul Rasoon Sayyaf** and his *Ittehad-e-Islami*, and the aforementioned **Gulbuddin Hekmatyar**. Both have been mentioned in an alleged plot against the Interim Administration that resulted in hundreds of arrests in Kabul early April 2002.²⁰ Hekmatyar, a consummate power-seeker who reportedly enjoys qualified support from Iran, recently has sought to make common cause with former Taliban opponents.²¹

Rural-Based Leadership. A fourth layer incorporates the main social and political fabric of rural Afghanistan – the patchwork of local tribal headers, commanders, petty warlords, and mullahs, with various connections to higher layers. In the absence of a firm Afghan government or international peacekeeper presence, these forces can be expected to engage in endless maneuvering for local dominance and control over “tax” collections on roads and the opium trade.

Economic Interests. Layer Five is composed of a variety of economic interests with countrywide influence, most notably the “**transport mafia**”, **drug kingpins**, and networks **smugglers**, some of whom play all three roles. A more positive component of this economic interest layer would include **exiles**, ranging from businessmen, technocrats, and former civil servants, most of whose ties are to Kabul and a few other cities.

Dynamic Interaction of Individual Actors and Forces

These individual actors and forces are capable of considerable flexibility of alignment; the strongest operate across multiple layers. The **Tajik component** of the **Northern Alliance** is the strongest because it combines the second largest ethnic group, military power on the ground, a political-ideological party structure – **Rabbani’s Jamiat** – and powerful foreign patrons—Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, and, more recently, the United States. The **Uzbek chief, General Dostum**, controls a vital road connection with Central Asia and has made and broken several different governments and alliances, and has no apparent Uzbek rivals. The **Pushtuns**, on the contrary, are divided by tribal and personal loyalties, and weakened by the historical

²⁰ Pamela Constable, *Afghans Arrest Hundreds, Citing Threat of Plots*. *Washington Post*, Feb. 25, 2002: A9.

²¹ Reportedly, Hekmatyar is the force behind an alleged plot to carry out a dramatic series of bombings in Kabul in early April 2002. Dexter Filkins, *Afghan Officials Arrest Hundreds in Bombing Plot*. *New York Times*, April 4, 2002 (internet edition).

divisions among the Durrani Confederation and Gilzais, in the west, and between both of them and the unaffiliated Eastern Pushtun tribal groupings. The **Hazaras**, a long repressed Shi'a minority of mongol stock, have gained in assertiveness as a consequence of their role in the anti-Soviet campaign and their struggle against ethnic cleansing by the Taliban. Organized under the banner of the **Hizb-e-Wahadat**, and led by **Karim Khalili**, the Hazaras are not strong enough to bid for power in their own right, but they will fight for their autonomy if they feel threatened.²²

Potential Swing Groups. The muddled matrix is complicated further by the unpredictable behavior of “swing” groups who historically have played the spoiler’s role. In addition to Dostum, noted above, these include especially the **Shinwari tribes**, centered around Jalalabad and the Kyber Pass. Traditionally the Shinwaris and other eastern Pushtun tribes have been bandits, preying on Khyber Pass goods traffic, and smugglers, and have rejected Durrani supremacy. They often have allied with Tajik and dissident Pushtun challengers to Durrani rule. During the anti-Soviet war, the Shinwaris and other eastern Pushtuns provided the main base of support for competing radical *mujahidin* groups led by Yunis Khalis and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, both of whom belong to non-mainstream Pushtun tribes. These are the tribes who assisted U.S. forces in the assault on the Tora Bora, some of whom also may have facilitated the escape of Al Qaeda forces.²³

Recognizing the potential swing value of the Shinwaris, Karzai and senior Tajik leaders in the Northern Alliance-dominated Interim Administration shrewdly appointed **Haji Abdul Qadir** as governor of Nangahar Province, but his ties to the Interim Government remain tenuous. The older brother of the late Abdul Haq, who was killed trying to start an anti-Taliban revolt among Eastern Pushtun tribes in the days after September 11, 2001, Qadir is a former mujahidin commander who held the same governorship during 1992-1995.

Stakes for the Participants. The participants are driven by a variety of largely anti-national motives—especially ethnic nationalism, personal power aspirations, vanity, and greed. Principal among the more concrete stakes is control and taxation of transportation routes and nodal points, and control of the drug trade. Several other considerations, however, have the potential for promoting cooperation. First, despite the depth of ethnic and tribal divisions, all of the contenders for power continue to regard themselves as Afghans, although Pushtun-Tajik antipathy remains high, and Pushtuns are especially angry that Tajiks hold most of the power in Kabul. Second, as it did with the Taliban, the powerful transportation mafia will strongly support the establishment of a government that can secure the highways and confine the collection of taxes and customs duties to the border crossings. Third, the

²² The plight of the Hazaras at the hands of the Taliban is best illustrated by massacres and the deliberate destruction of the giant statues of the Buddha in Bamiyan. Pamela Constable, *Return to a Battered Homeland*. *Washington Post*, April 10, 2002: A14, A19.

²³ Barton Gellman and Thomas E. Ricks, *U.S. Concludes Bin Laden Escaped at Tora Bora Fight*. *The Washington Post*, April 17, 2002: A1, A10; Philip Smucker, *After Tora Bora, US Hunts Alone*. *Christian Science Monitor* (internet edition), January 28, 2002 [<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0128/p01s05-wosc.html>].

prospect of \$10-15 billion in international aid has provided substantial incentives for Afghans to cooperate, at least minimally, with the Interim Administration. Last but not least, is awareness among the current contenders for power, especially within the ranks of the Tajiks of the Northern Alliance, of the costs of the internecine conflict that followed the Soviet withdrawal. Many of the main figures in the Interim Administration appear to be eager not to repeat this mistake.

Four Scenarios for the Future Afghan State

Because more than two decades of conflict have largely destroyed the old Afghan polity and economy, the past offers no reliable “roadmap” to constructing a politically stable and economically viable Afghan state. This conclusion is strongly suggested by two particular developments of the past two decades—the collapse of the Durrani ascendancy, which started with Daoud’s coup in 1973, and the rise of Tajik power and, to a lesser extent, that of other ethnic minorities. Durrani political dominance is not likely to be reestablished because of the scattering of the Afghan elite numbering perhaps 100,000, largely to North America and Europe, and the polarization of Pushtun society by internal conflict and the rise of the predominantly Pushtun Taliban. The return of King Zahir Shah to his country after more than 30 years of exile, may lend some support to the political process but cannot restore the previous status quo—nor is it intended to under the Bonn Accord. For better or worse, the Tajiks, who are less divided than the Pushtuns, now appear firmly established in Kabul, elsewhere in the North, and in Herat. General Dostum, the Uzbek warlord, also appears in firm control of Mazar-i-Sharif. On the other hand, Kandahar, Jalalabad, and other important population centers in the South and Southeast show no similar coalescence under one leader or group of leaders.

Democratic Pluralism – A Necessity, Not a Luxury

The breakdown of the royalist governing structure and the subsequent inability of either the *mujahidin* or the Taliban to establish a stable government suggests strongly that for Afghanistan, some form of democratic pluralism is a necessity, not a luxury. Both at the provincial and central levels, stability, if it is possible, seems most likely to come from some form of democratic process. The traditional practice of appointing provincial governors, or allowing the rule of local warlords, by default, appears particularly dangerous to stability in the absence of a strong central government and a national army and police force.

Depending on a number of factors, especially the actions of the main Afghan contenders for power, neighboring countries with the capacity to intervene in Afghan affairs, and the United States and the international community, several different outcomes could result from current developments. Four of the most likely ones are described below, in descending order of desirability for the Afghans and for U.S. interests.

1. Transitional Regime Leading to Pluralistic Democracy

Under present circumstances the most desirable outcome would be the formation of a broadly representative transitional authority leading ultimately to the establishment of a pluralistic democracy, as envisioned by the agreement reached at Bonn in early December 2001. The next pending phase is the convening of an Emergency *Loya Jirga* scheduled for June 2002, which is to choose members of a broad-based Transitional Authority. The Emergency *Loya Jirga* is to be opened by the ex-King, who returned from exile under tight security on April 18, 2002.

Both the negative lessons of recent history and the attraction of major international aid may constitute sufficient incentives for cooperation among the forces which will constitute the interim administration in Kabul. It is much more questionable whether such an administration can gain the adherence of warlords and commanders in the provinces, or even in Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif. Certainly the basic problem of the collapse of Pushtun political cohesiveness cannot be solved by this process. So long as Pushtuns continue to view themselves as the “real Afghans,” the Pushtun-minority divide will remain a major source of instability.

2. Northern Alliance-Dominated State

The most obvious consequence of the rise and fall of the Taliban is the stronger position of the minority ethnic groups of the Northern Alliance. Controlling Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, and Herat, the constituent elements of the Northern Alliance effectively hold sway over more than half of the country and all its six international borders except the one with Pakistan. Whether the main Alliance ethnic components—Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras – have adequately absorbed the lesson of their previous internecine conflict and self-serving opportunism remains to be seen. Some Alliance leaders clearly understand that the revival of Pushtun power under the banner of the Taliban occurred because of past Alliance excesses. Others, notably General Dostum, still appear to seek to create a local fiefdom, and will cooperate with the other Alliance components only to the extent that it serves their interest.

Absent strong pressure by the United States, other powers, and the international community, the Northern Alliance may be tempted to seek to become the dominant force in a future Afghan government—possibly by promoting the candidacy of Rabbani or another Northern Alliance leader in the elections that are planned for 2003 under the Bonn Agreement. Such a government probably would result in the defacto partition of the country, as in Scenario 3, below, since the Alliance stands little chance of establishing effective sway over the southern Pushtun heartland.

3. Disappearance of a Unified Afghan State

Scenario 2 could possibly descend into the complete disappearance of a unified Afghan state, though this still seems unlikely. Partition might seem like the most realistic solution if current divisions become unresolvable, but the regional consequences would be severe. It is doubtful whether neighboring countries would be able to avoid competing for control or influence over adjacent areas on the Afghan side of the border. Among other considerations, countries challenged by Islamic

extremism or ethnic revolts, such as in the case of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, would not want to allow a “no man’s land” on their borders. Russia would have the same interest, both to prevent the overthrow of friendly central Asian states or the establishment of havens for Chechens and other armed independence movements. Iran would be tempted to extend its influence over vast parts of western Afghanistan that had historically been part of the Persian empire, and also to protect the interests of co-religionists in the central Hazarajat.

Pakistan has foresworn any intent to interfere in Afghan affairs as part of its current cooperation with the United States, but if chaos should ensue, Islamabad likely would once again deem it necessary to find and support Afghan allies who might be able to stabilize the Pushtun belt and contest for power in Kabul with the Northern Alliance. Such potential allies are not now apparent, but could emerge out of remnants of the Taliban or even in the person of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Pakistan’s old ally against Mohammad Daoud’s Republic, the PDPA regime, and the Soviet invaders.

In its most benign form, the bifurcation of the country could nominally have the appearance of a unified government, but with little real power or resources at its command. Meanwhile, local warlords and *shuras* (councils of commanders, mullahs, and elders) would attempt to govern smaller cities and the countryside. Since very little of Afghanistan is without significant numbers of minorities, “ethnic cleansing” and voluntary population realignments could create a major humanitarian crisis. Some human rights abuses have already been inflicted on Pushtuns living in Tajik-majority areas of the North, creating thousands of additional internally displaced persons (IDPs) in refugee camps for internal refugees.²⁴ The temptation of neighbors to secure their borders and promote the interests of ethnic and religious counterparts would be strong.

The descent of Afghanistan into chaos once again would jeopardize a number of important U.S. interests. These include access to the oil and gas resources of Central Asia, instability that could spread to the Persian Gulf, a further expansion of opium production in Afghanistan, and the continued use of Afghan territory by terrorist groups. The already difficult task of maintaining Pakistani cooperation against terrorism might become impossible.

4. Caretaker Ward of the International Community

The potential negative consequences of failure to recreate a stable Afghanistan could conceivably impel the United States, its allies, important neighbors such as Russia, and the international community, to seek to set up an Afghan-staffed caretaker government backed with foreign advisors and enough international peacekeepers to maintain security in Kabul and other cities. This approach, by which international peacekeeping and nation-building would become quasi-permanent, rather than transitional, could only work if the Afghans themselves—and the warlords in particular—decided that accepting such an effort by the international community

²⁴ Briefing by international agency personnel, April 4, 2002, for House International Relations Committee Staff.

was preferable to unending civil strife or undesired political outcomes. In theory, if basic security, services, and reconstruction could be provided to more densely populated areas, Afghans outside the reach of the immediate caretaker authority would gravitate to secure areas to seek the benefits of international support.

This scenario likely would require an interim government composed of figures who are acceptable to the major ethnic and other interest groups but who would not themselves be contenders for power.²⁵ The most acceptable candidates are likely to be found among the ranks of Afghans with technocratic qualifications, including former senior civil servants, Afghan nationals currently or previously with multilateral banks, and other professionals—including current exiles. Some of these are already in the interim cabinet. Undoubtedly the government would benefit from the assistance of foreign advisors, either from donor governments or international organizations. Especially weighing against this option is that given Afghanistan's history and current situation, such a prolonged foreign role could easily become a military and political quagmire.

Factors Affecting the Outcome

Which, if any, of these scenarios prevails likely will be determined by a number of key factors. Some of these are susceptible to external influence, others can only be decided by the Afghans themselves.

Resolution of Disputes on Power Sharing in the Central Government

Little progress can be achieved on other necessary steps until the parties and groups that have the ability to disrupt the process agree on how to share power. The next critical phase will be the selection of delegates to the *Loya Jirga* that is to be held in June. It still is not clear that those with the power to disrupt the interim government will cooperate. Even if a stable power balance is achieved at the national level, the basic instinct of most of the Afghan leaders and warlords still is to compete for “turf” and the opportunities to extract cash from the population in the form of taxes and other levies. This will make it very hard to establish effective centralized institutions and extend the reach of the government into the countryside.

Economic Development and the Issue of Jobs or Guns

Up to a certain point the reestablishment of normal life will allow armed fighters to return to peaceful civilian pursuits, but the traditional economy will not provide enough jobs or the right kinds of jobs to fully absorb the ranks of the former

²⁵ One model could be the caretaker administration in Pakistan during 1993, headed by a respected Pakistani World Bank economist. The administration headed by Moeen Qureshi restored stability and prepared the country for new elections after the army had forced the resignation of the President and Prime Minister, owing to a power struggle that had created a deadlocked government. Once normal politics resumed so did instability, however, leading, eventually, to military takeover led by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

combatants, whether anti-Taliban or Taliban. Without jobs, and without a public educational system, young Afghan men are likely to gravitate to the service of warlords and/or to study in the Islamic madrassas, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan.²⁶ One significant problem is that the families of Afghan emigres have grown in the intervening years, and in many cases will be too large to be supported by the family farmstead, even if it is reclaimed and brought back into production. Some level of industrial development, even rudimentary activities such as food processing, textile manufacturing, and the production of basic farm and household implements, would appear necessary to absorb surplus workers and farm labor.

Economic Development and The Future Role Islam

Because most of the Afghan combatants have mobilized on the basis of an appeal to Islamic sentiment, often of a radical fundamentalist nature, progress towards economic modernization is likely to encounter strong resistance, especially with regard to education and the employment of women in the workforce. Nonetheless, reconstruction based on the revitalization and modernization of the Afghan economy may be the only way to overcome tendencies towards internecine warfare and chaos.

Unless the economy becomes more dynamic, politicized Islam is likely to remain the single most powerful *ideological* force, even if radical fundamentalism does not appeal to the majority of Afghans. Assuming that the Taliban remain dispersed and do not play a visible political role, and that other Islamist forces remain marginalized, religion may not necessarily reemerge as the main rallying cry of anti-government forces. These are big “ifs,” however. The central government may face difficult choices in attempting to promote modernization and development along secular lines, while not stirring up an Islamist reaction.

Issues for U.S. Policy

Inevitably U.S. policy will have a significant influence on the outcome of the current effort to reconstruct a stable Afghan state. In addition to playing a key role in driving the Taliban from power, in concert with Afghan forces on the ground, the United States has been the largest donor by far to the feeding programs of the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), and it is certain to be among the leading contributors to economic reconstruction.²⁷

²⁶ In the words of a noted expert on the Taliban, young men who had grew up in the camps and war zones “admired war because it was the only occupation they could possibly adapt to. Their simple belief in messianic, puritan Islam which had been drummed into them by simple village mullahs, was the only prop they could held [sic] on to, and which gave their lives some meaning.” Rashid, *Taliban*, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

²⁷ For information on the U.S. humanitarian role, see CRS Report RL31355, *Afghanistan’s Path to Reconstruction: Obstacles, Challenges, and Issues for Congress*, by Rhoda Margesson.

For the future, three roles on the part of the United States would appear extremely critical, over and above humanitarian assistance:

1. Support for the Political Process

The creation of a moderate Afghan state requires the establishment of a stable political order, the creation of effective state institutions, and the reconstruction of the country's economic infrastructure and rural economy. All of these must take place simultaneously, and should be mutually reinforcing, but the creation of a stable and moderate political settlement is the *sine qua non*.

The fragile transitional governing coalition will likely remain vulnerable to disruption for the foreseeable future, with regional warlords giving or withholding support depending on the degree that their power aspirations are satisfied. Dissident warlords and commanders, such as General Dostum in the North and Ismail Khan in the West, will likely long retain the ability to assert their autonomy and disrupt key communications routes.

Many other countries and international organizations can provide aid, technical assistance, and even security for Kabul and other important cities, but most observers believe that only the United States has the international prestige and influence, the logistical capabilities, and the military power to influence decisively the internal Afghan political process. The inability of the United Nations and humanitarian NGOs to stave off Afghanistan's descent into chaos after the withdrawal of the Soviet Union, makes clear that the reconstruction of a moderate Afghan state cannot be accomplished without strong U.S. engagement.

2. Close Engagement with Pakistan

Close U.S. engagement with Pakistan, the country with the greatest capacity for good or ill, will also be critical to the creation of a stable Afghanistan. Pakistan, which by far has the greatest capacity to influence developments in the Pushtun South, is also the country whose perceived interests are the most threatened by the collapse of the Taliban and the rising power of the Tajik and Uzbek-dominated Northern Alliance. Islamabad sees several potential sources of danger, the primary ones being the possibility of ongoing conflict and chaos in the Pushtun belt and heightened Indian, Russian, and Iranian influence in Kabul.

The Bush Administration and the Congress appear to recognize that Pakistan's military president, General Musharraf, has crossed the Rubicon in committing to cooperate closely in the U.S.-led anti-terrorist campaign. The decision, which was largely dictated by extreme U.S. pressure, was not without a number of benefits for Pakistan, dramatically displayed during Musharraf's February 2002 visit to Washington. Apart from various kinds of new assistance and debt relief, Musharraf's crackdown on his own Islamic radicals showed that these groups generally lacked strong public support, and strengthened his hold on power. On the other hand, increasing tensions with India over Kashmir, fueled by Pakistan's own alleged support of local terrorist groups, has intensified Islamabad's perception of being

squeezed between a potentially hostile or unstable Afghanistan and a demonstrably hostile India.

Especially because of the possession of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan, the United States would appear to have a compelling interest in pressuring both Pakistan and India to act responsibly on the Kashmir issue, while also making sure that Pakistan continues to play a positive role in Afghanistan and in the anti-terrorist fight. All of these interests would appear to mandate the closest possible engagement with Pakistan, including efforts to promote support for U.S. viewpoints among parties and leaders who are likely to play a major role when military rule gives way to elections and the restoration of civilian government.

3. Bilateral Assistance and Participation in International Assistance and Development Efforts

Both the Bush Administration and the Congress have made clear their intention to provide substantial aid to Afghanistan, but the actual amount and kind of assistance that the United States provides could prove highly important to the prospects for recreating a stable Afghan government. The Tokyo meeting of aid donors in January 2002, which was co-hosted by Japan, the United States, the European Union, and Saudi Arabia, generated nearly \$1.5 billion in near-term aid pledges, including a U.S. commitment of \$296 million.²⁸ The Bush Administration has allocated about \$311.3 million for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan for FY 2002, which began October 1, 2001.

U.S. aid provided through the WFP and NGOs clearly will be important in preventing famine, reconstructing agriculture, and restoring basic infrastructure, but visible bilateral American aid would also appear to be critical to promoting the U.S.-desired political outcomes. In this respect, many argue that if the Bonn process is to be viable, warlords and others who are calculating whether to cooperate with the Bonn process or carve out permanent fiefdoms arguably need to see that the Interim Administration, and the arrangements for creating a new, pluralistic democratic order have the backing of the United States and other aid donors.

Conclusion: Issues for Congressional Consideration

A number of recent incidents of political violence and the recent rounding up of alleged plotters associated with the former black sheep of the anti-Soviet resistance, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, underscore that events in Afghanistan may be coming to a head sooner rather than later. The issue-forcing event is the impending Emergency *Loya Jirga*, scheduled for June 2002. The Karzai-headed Interim Administration already is in the process of negotiating the composition of the assembly, which will include about 2,600 Afghans from various walks of life. Those

²⁸ CNNfyi.com, Nations Pledge Billions to Rebuild Afghanistan. January 21, 2002.

who do not want this process to go forward, at least not on current terms, appear to be looking for a way to derail it and even to overturn the current interim government.

The United States and other international supporters of a stable and moderate Afghanistan have reason for caution about the viability and outcome of the Bonn process, but failure is all but guaranteed if the Karzai administration does not have the financial resources and security capability with which to gain the support of enough Afghans with the requisite social and political influence who can take the process successfully to the next stage. From all accounts, the Karzai-headed government continues to live from hand-to-mouth, and international agencies such as the U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), only have funds on hand for a few weeks of operations.

Issues of Special Congressional Interest: Narcotics Production and Women's Rights

In hearing statements, speeches, and in proposed legislation, Members of Congress have stressed their concerns particularly about Afghanistan's status as a major opium production area and about the status of women. Both of these are extremely complicated issues given Afghanistan's social and economic traditions. Progress on both issues, if it is to occur, clearly depends on fundamental economic and social modernization, which is most likely to occur under a government that has both a progressive outlook and popular support based on participatory politics.

Narcotics or Development. The U.S. stake in economic development in Afghanistan is even more clear with regard to Afghan's status as the world's leading producer of opium. Many of the poppy-growing areas are the fiefdoms of tribal leaders whose tribes which have for centuries depended on illicit sources of income, including drugs and smuggling. Nangahar Province, near the eastern border with Pakistan, is a major center of opium production. In the recent past, before the Taliban takeover, international agencies reportedly had some success in gaining cuts in poppy production in Nangahar and other poppy-growing areas of southeastern Afghanistan, in exchange for economic assistance, but such gains tend to be inconsistent, at best.

The Karzai administration has announced an ambitious U.S.-backed program to make one-time payments to farmers to destroy their opium crops or face destruction by government agents without compensation. The payments are said to amount to something more than for a wheat crop, but much less than the value of an opium crop. Reportedly, the United States, the U.K., and other Western countries have agreed to finance the program, but U.S. officials are also said to despair of having any major impact for three major reasons: (1) the Kabul government simply does not have the staff or reach to have an impact on many of the most important producing areas; (2) the crop is nearly ready for harvest; and (3) the poppy growers and their affiliated smugglers and warlords may fight against any effort to forcefully destroy the crops. A decree signed by Chairman Karzai on behalf of the interim

government, which would make illegal the collection of loans to opium growers, is widely viewed as unenforceable.²⁹

Future Status of Women in Afghan Society. The issue of the rights of women in Afghan society has been at the center of the struggle between modernization and tradition. The same political conditions that have created support for reactionary religious ideas have fostered retrogression in the status of women. Both in the refugee camps and in conflict areas, young men were separated from the company of even their female relatives. Some analysts believe the lack of ordinary contact with women in the refugee camps across the border in Pakistan has heightened sex discrimination in Afghanistan beyond traditional levels. Also, because of the concerns of women about their safety in a male-dominated society, they sometimes themselves embrace the veil and burka out of self-protection.³⁰

The picture is not uniformly bleak, however. Especially in urban areas, even socially conservative Afghans have recognized the importance of female education. Young women have flocked enthusiastically to Kabul University and other educational institutions since they have reopened. The real rate of progress in this area, however, probably will depend on the pace of economic revival and modernization.

Three Policy Issues for Possible Congressional Consideration

Congress may wish to consider several issues in particular that bear on the ability of the United States to provide timely and effective assistance and support to the interim government and the Bonn process. The first is the seeming inability of U.S. representatives in Kabul to provide reliable expectations regarding the deliveries of various forms of assistance. One source of delay in the delivery of U.S. support to the Interim Administration is that funding is scattered over at least six different departments and agencies, all of which have their own bureaucratic procedures. This reality has been a persistent problem in a number of situations, including U.S. assistance to Bosnia.³¹ It may be possible to bring more order and cohesion to this process without altering basic lines of department and agency authority and responsibility, which have evolved over a long period of time and would be difficult to change.

Tension between Dual U.S. Objectives. From the point of view of Afghan politics, an even more important issue may be a significant level of tension between the objectives of U.S. military operations against Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants and the goal of bolstering the power of the Kabul administration vis-à-vis regional warlords. By nearly all accounts, U.S. military forces made brilliant use of

²⁹ Dexter Filkins, Afghanistan to Pay Farmers for Uprooted Poppies. *New York Times*, April 5, 2002: A13.

³⁰ Rashid, *Taliban*, *op. cit.*, p. 105-114.

³¹ See CRS Report RL30831, *Balkan Conflicts: U.S. Humanitarian Assistance and Issues for Congress*, by Rhoda Margesson.

local Afghan militias and other irregular forces, thereby advancing the date for the replacement of the Taliban government by the Interim Administration, as well as saving many lives—American and allied, as well as Afghan. Unfortunately, U.S. military strategy, including on-going operations, has inadvertently bolstered the power of warlords who wish to resist the imposition of Kabul’s authority, and also increased the possibility that any renewal of internal conflict will be more intense and deadly. A start was made in resolving this contradiction by the recent “graduation” of the first contingent of a new, multi-ethnic national army, but as noted above, this will long remain a negligible force when compared to those of the regional warlords – even those in Kabul itself.

Response to Calls for Expanded International Peacekeeping.

Especially because U.S. forces are already engaged as de facto arbiters and peacekeepers, often at risk to the forces themselves, Congress may wish to consider further the Bush Administration’s opposition to calls for increasing the numbers and dispersion of international peacekeepers, possibly including U.S. forces. The Defense Department has argued that the presence of international peacekeeping forces could complicate the coordination of their ongoing military operations. On the other hand, international aid agencies and aid workers are almost universal in declaring that they cannot function without the security provided by international peacekeepers. Also, aid agencies note that international peacekeepers have been a “draw” factor in attracting hundreds of thousands of refugees back to their homes, but thus far mainly in the neighborhood of Kabul. International relief officials argue that much more rapid progress could be made in returning both external and internal refugees to their homes if the size of the peacekeeping force could be enlarged and deployed to other population centers.

Possible Benefits of a More Transparent U.S. Military Role on the Ground. One potential benefit of making the current U.S. role more transparent would be to defuse Afghan suspicions that the United States is seeking to convert the ongoing hunt for Taliban and Al Qaeda remnants into an indefinite military occupation. Afghanistan has a history of reacting harshly to the presence of foreign military forces and interference in Afghan politics. Every local conflict that U.S. forces may defuse has the potential for creating enemies. This is an inevitable consequence of peacekeeping, but since many ordinary Afghans welcome an international presence and the security it provides, operating under U.N. or other international auspices may provoke less of a backlash. Whether the time is right for reconsidering the nature and modalities of the U.S. military role may be an issue which Congress may wish to engage.

Appendix I: Bonn Agreements on Afghanistan

AGREEMENT ON PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN PENDING THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan,

In the presence of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan,

Determined to end the tragic conflict in Afghanistan and promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights in the country,

Reaffirming the independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan,

Acknowledging the right of the people of Afghanistan to freely determine their own political future in accordance with the principles of Islam, democracy, pluralism and social justice,

Expressing their appreciation to the Afghan mujahidin who, over the years, have defended the independence, territorial integrity and national unity of the country and have played a major role in the struggle against terrorism and oppression, and whose sacrifice has now made them both heroes of jihad and champions of peace, stability and reconstruction of their beloved homeland, Afghanistan,

Aware that the unstable situation in Afghanistan requires the implementation of emergency interim arrangements and expressing their deep appreciation to His Excellency Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani for his readiness to transfer power to an interim authority which is to be established pursuant to this agreement,

Recognizing the need to ensure broad representation in these interim arrangements of all segments of the Afghan population, including groups that have not been adequately represented at the UN Talks on Afghanistan,

Noting that these interim arrangements are intended as a first step toward the establishment of a broad-based, gender-sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, and are not intended to remain in place beyond the specified period of time,

Recognizing that some time may be required for a new Afghan security force to be fully constituted and functional and that therefore other security provisions detailed in Annex I to this agreement must meanwhile be put in place,

Considering that the United Nations, as the internationally recognized impartial institution, has a particularly important role to play, detailed in Annex II to this

agreement, in the period prior to the establishment of permanent institutions in Afghanistan,

Have agreed as follows:

THE INTERIM AUTHORITY

I. General provisions

1) An Interim Authority shall be established upon the official transfer of power on 22 December 2001.

2) The Interim Authority shall consist of an Interim Administration presided over by a Chairman, a Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*, and a Supreme Court of Afghanistan, as well as such other courts as may be established by the Interim Administration. The composition, functions and governing procedures for the Interim Administration and the Special Independent Commission are set forth in this agreement.

3) Upon the official transfer of power, the Interim Authority shall be the repository of Afghan sovereignty, with immediate effect. As such, it shall, throughout the interim period, represent Afghanistan in its external relations and shall occupy the seat of Afghanistan at the United Nations and in its specialized agencies, as well as in other international institutions and conferences.

4) An Emergency *Loya Jirga* shall be convened within six months of the establishment of the Interim Authority. The Emergency *Loya Jirga* will be opened by His Majesty Mohammed Zaher [sic], the former King of Afghanistan. The Emergency *Loya Jirga* shall decide on a Transitional Authority, including a broad-based transitional administration, to lead Afghanistan until such time as a fully representative government can be elected through free and fair elections to be held no later than two years from the date of the convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*.

5) The Interim Authority shall cease to exist once the Transitional Authority has been established by the Emergency *Loya Jirga*.

6) A Constitutional *Loya Jirga* shall be convened within eighteen months of the establishment of the Transitional Authority, in order to adopt a new constitution for Afghanistan. In order to assist the Constitutional *Loya Jirga* prepare the proposed Constitution, the Transitional Administration shall, within two months of its commencement and with the assistance of the United Nations, establish a Constitutional Commission.

II. Legal framework and judicial system

1) The following legal framework shall be applicable on an interim basis until the adoption of the new Constitution referred to above:

i) The Constitution of 1964, a/ to the extent that its provisions are not inconsistent with those contained in this agreement, and b/ with the exception of those provisions relating to the monarchy and to the executive and legislative bodies provided in the Constitution; and

ii) existing laws and regulations, to the extent that they are not inconsistent with this agreement or with international legal obligations to which Afghanistan is a party, or with those applicable provisions contained in the Constitution of 1964, provided that the Interim Authority shall have the power to repeal or amend those laws and regulations.

2) The judicial power of Afghanistan shall be independent and shall be vested in a Supreme Court of Afghanistan, and such other courts as may be established by the Interim Administration. The Interim Administration shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, a Judicial Commission to rebuild the domestic justice system in accordance with Islamic principles, international standards, the rule of law and Afghan legal traditions.

III. Interim Administration

A. Composition

1) The Interim Administration shall be composed of a Chairman, five Vice Chairmen and 24 other members. Each member, except the Chairman, may head a department of the Interim Administration.

2) The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan have invited His Majesty Mohammed Zaher [sic], the former King of Afghanistan, to chair the Interim Administration. His Majesty has indicated that he would prefer that a suitable candidate acceptable to the participants be selected as the Chair of the Interim Administration.

3) The Chairman, the Vice Chairmen and other members of the Interim Administration have been selected by the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan, as listed in Annex IV to this agreement. The selection has been made on the basis of professional competence and personal integrity from lists submitted by the participants in the UN Talks, with due regard to the ethnic, geographic and religious composition of Afghanistan and to the importance of the participation of women.

4) No person serving as a member of the Interim Administration may simultaneously hold membership of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*.

B. Procedures

1) The Chairman of the Interim Administration, or in his/her absence one of the Vice Chairmen, shall call and chair meetings and propose the agenda for these meetings.

2) The Interim Administration shall endeavour to reach its decisions by consensus. In order for any decision to be taken, at least 22 members must be in attendance. If a vote becomes necessary, decisions shall be taken by a majority of the members present and voting, unless otherwise stipulated in this agreement. The Chairman shall cast the deciding vote in the event that the members are divided equally.

C. Functions

1) The Interim Administration shall be entrusted with the day-to-day conduct of the affairs of state, and shall have the right to issue decrees for the peace, order and good government of Afghanistan.

2) The Chairman of the Interim Administration or, in his/her absence, one of the Vice Chairmen, shall represent the Interim Administration as appropriate.

3) Those members responsible for the administration of individual departments shall also be responsible for implementing the policies of the Interim Administration within their areas of responsibility.

4) Upon the official transfer of power, the Interim Administration shall have full jurisdiction over the printing and delivery of the national currency and special drawing rights from international financial institutions. The Interim Administration shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, a Central Bank of Afghanistan that will regulate the money supply of the country through transparent and accountable procedures.

5) The Interim Administration shall establish, with the assistance of the United Nations, an independent Civil Service Commission to provide the Interim Authority and the future Transitional Authority with shortlists of candidates for key posts in the administrative departments, as well as those of governors and uluswals, in order to ensure their competence and integrity.

6) The Interim Administration shall, with the assistance of the United Nations, establish an independent Human Rights Commission, whose responsibilities will include human rights monitoring, investigation of violations of human rights, and development of domestic human rights institutions. The Interim Administration may, with the assistance of the United Nations, also establish any other commissions to review matters not covered in this agreement.

7) The members of the Interim Administration shall abide by a Code of Conduct elaborated in accordance with international standards.

8) Failure by a member of the Interim Administration to abide by the provisions of the Code of Conduct shall lead to his/her suspension from that body. The decision to suspend a member shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of the membership of the Interim Administration on the proposal of its Chairman or any of its Vice Chairmen.

9) The functions and powers of members of the Interim Administration will be further elaborated, as appropriate, with the assistance of the United Nations.

IV. The Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*

1) The Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga* shall be established within one month of the establishment of the Interim Authority. The Special Independent Commission will consist of twenty-one members, a number of whom should have expertise in constitutional or customary law. The members will be selected from lists of candidates submitted by participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan as well as Afghan professional and civil society groups. The United Nations will assist with the establishment and functioning of the commission and of a substantial secretariat.

2) The Special Independent Commission will have the final authority for determining the procedures for and the number of people who will participate in the Emergency *Loya Jirga*. The Special Independent Commission will draft rules and procedures specifying (i) criteria for allocation of seats to the settled and nomadic population residing in the country; (ii) criteria for allocation of seats to the Afghan refugees living in Iran, Pakistan, and elsewhere, and Afghans from the diaspora; (iii) criteria for inclusion of civil society organizations and prominent individuals, including Islamic scholars, intellectuals, and traders, both within the country and in the diaspora. The Special Independent Commission will ensure that due attention is paid to the representation in the Emergency *Loya Jirga* of a significant number of women as well as all other segments of the Afghan population.

3) The Special Independent Commission will publish and disseminate the rules and procedures for the convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga* at least ten weeks before the Emergency *Loya Jirga* convenes, together with the date for its commencement and its suggested location and duration.

4) The Special Independent Commission will adopt and implement procedures for monitoring the process of nomination of individuals to the Emergency *Loya Jirga* to ensure that the process of indirect election or selection is transparent and fair. To pre-empt conflict over nominations, the Special Independent Commission will specify mechanisms for filing of grievances and rules for arbitration of disputes.

5) The Emergency *Loya Jirga* will elect a Head of the State for the Transitional Administration and will approve proposals for the structure and key personnel of the Transitional Administration.

V. Final provisions

1) Upon the official transfer of power, all mujahidin, Afghan armed forces and armed groups in the country shall come under the command and control of the Interim Authority, and be reorganized according to the requirements of the new Afghan security and armed forces.

2) The Interim Authority and the Emergency *Loya Jirga* shall act in accordance with basic principles and provisions contained in international instruments on human rights and international humanitarian law to which Afghanistan is a party.

3) The Interim Authority shall cooperate with the international community in the fight against terrorism, drugs and organized crime. It shall commit itself to respect international law and maintain peaceful and friendly relations with neighbouring countries and the rest of the international community.

4) The Interim Authority and the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga* will ensure the participation of women as well as the equitable representation of all ethnic and religious communities in the Interim Administration and the Emergency *Loya Jirga*.

5) All actions taken by the Interim Authority shall be consistent with Security Council resolution 1378 (14 November 2001) and other relevant Security Council resolutions relating to Afghanistan.

6) Rules of procedure for the organs established under the Interim Authority will be elaborated as appropriate with the assistance of the United Nations.

This agreement, of which the annexes constitute an integral part, done in Bonn on this 5th day of December 2001 in the English language, shall be the authentic text, in a single copy which shall remain deposited in the archives of the United Nations. Official texts shall be provided in Dari and Pashto, and such other languages as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General may designate. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General shall send certified copies in English, Dari and Pashto to each of the participants.

For the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan:

Ms. Amena Afzali
Mr. S. Hussain Anwari
Mr. Hedayat Amin Arsala
Mr. Sayed Hamed Gailani
Mr. Rahmatullah Musa Ghazi
Eng. Abdul Hakim
Mr. Houmayoun Jareer
Mr. Abbas Karimi
Mr. Mustafa Kazimi
Dr. Azizullah Ludin
Mr. Ahmad Wali Massoud
Mr. Hafizullah Asif Mohseni
Prof. Mohammad Ishaq Nadiri
Mr. Mohammad Natiqi
Mr. Yunus Qanooni
Dr. Zalmai Rassoul
Mr. H. Mirwais Sadeq
Dr. Mohammad Jalil Shams
Prof. Abdul Sattar Sirat

Mr. Humayun Tandar
Mrs. Sima Wali
General Abdul Rahim Wardak
Mr. Pacha Khan Zadran

Witnessed for the United Nations by:

Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan

ANNEX I

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCE

1. The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan recognize that the responsibility for providing security and law and order throughout the country resides with the Afghans themselves. To this end, they pledge their commitment to do all within their means and influence to ensure such security, including for all United Nations and other personnel of international governmental and non-governmental organizations deployed in Afghanistan.

2. With this objective in mind, the participants request the assistance of the international community in helping the new Afghan authorities in the establishment and training of new Afghan security and armed forces.

3. Conscious that some time may be required for the new Afghan security and armed forces to be fully constituted and functioning, the participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan request the United Nations Security Council to consider authorizing the early deployment to Afghanistan of a United Nations mandated force. This force will assist in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas. Such a force could, as appropriate, be progressively expanded to other urban centres and other areas.

4. The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan pledge to withdraw all military units from Kabul and other urban centers or other areas in which the UN mandated force is deployed. It would also be desirable if such a force were to assist in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan's infrastructure.

ANNEX II

ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD

1. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General will be responsible for all aspects of the United Nations' work in Afghanistan.

2. The Special Representative shall monitor and assist in the implementation of all aspects of this agreement.

3. The United Nations shall advise the Interim Authority in establishing a politically neutral environment conducive to the holding of the Emergency Loya Jirga in free and fair conditions. The United Nations shall pay special attention to the conduct of those bodies and administrative departments which could directly influence the convening and outcome of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*.

4. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General or his/her delegate may be invited to attend the meetings of the Interim Administration and the Special Independent Commission on the Convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*.

5. If for whatever reason the Interim Administration or the Special Independent Commission were actively prevented from meeting or unable to reach a decision on a matter related to the convening of the Emergency *Loya Jirga*, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General shall, taking into account the views expressed in the Interim Administration or in the Special Independent Commission, use his/her good offices with a view to facilitating a resolution to the impasse or a decision.

6. The United Nations shall have the right to investigate human rights violations and, where necessary, recommend corrective action. It will also be responsible for the development and implementation of a programme of human rights education to promote respect for and understanding of human rights.

ANNEX III

REQUEST TO THE UNITED NATIONS BY THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE
UN TALKS ON AFGHANISTAN

The participants in the UN Talks on Afghanistan hereby

1. Request that the United Nations and the international community take the necessary measures to guarantee the national sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Afghanistan as well as the non-interference by foreign countries in Afghanistan's internal affairs;

2. Urge the United Nations, the international community, particularly donor countries and multilateral institutions, to reaffirm, strengthen and implement their commitment to assist with the rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction of Afghanistan, in coordination with the Interim Authority;

3. Request the United Nations to conduct as soon as possible (i) a registration of voters in advance of the general elections that will be held upon the adoption of the new constitution by the constitutional *Loya Jirga* and (ii) a census of the population of Afghanistan.

4. Urge the United Nations and the international community, in recognition of the heroic role played by the mujahidin in protecting the independence of Afghanistan and the dignity of its people, to take the necessary measures, in coordination with the Interim Authority, to assist in the reintegration of the mujahidin into the new Afghan security and armed forces;

5. Invite the United Nations and the international community to create a fund to assist the families and other dependents of martyrs and victims of the war, as well as the war disabled;

6. Strongly urge that the United Nations, the international community and regional organizations cooperate with the Interim Authority to combat international terrorism, cultivation and trafficking of illicit drugs and provide Afghan farmers with financial, material and technical resources for alternative crop production.